FluWatch

Public Health Agency of Canada | Agence de la santé publique du Canada

August 26 to September 8, 2018 (Weeks 35 & 36)

Overall Summary

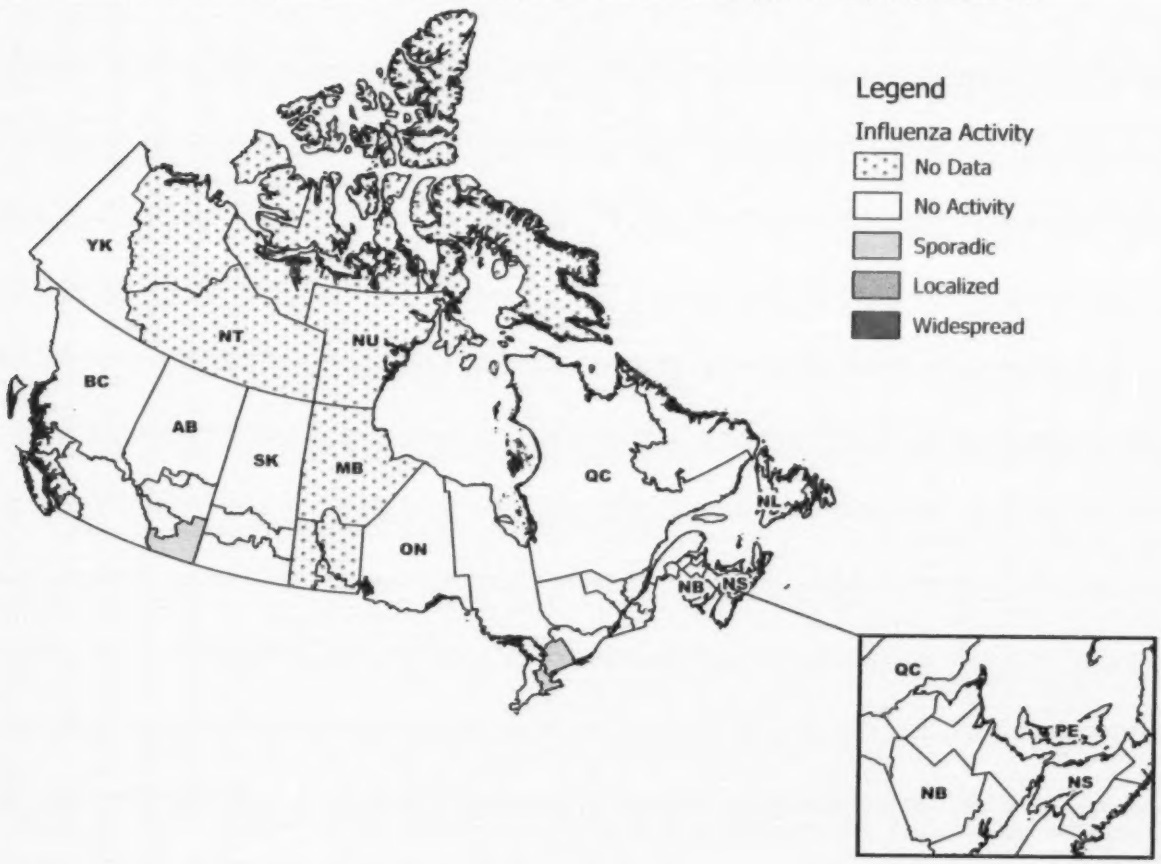
- Influenza activity is at interseasonal levels across the country.
- The majority of regions in Canada are reporting no influenza activity.
- All indicators of influenza activity are at low levels, as expected for this time of year.
- Influenza A is the most common influenza virus circulating in Canada.
- This is the first FluWatch report of the 2018-2019 season. Influenza and other respiratory viruses are monitored weekly and results reported every Thursday in the Respiratory Virus Detections in Canada Report.

Influenza/Influenza-like Illness (ILI) Activity (geographic spread)

During week 36, the following influenza activity levels were reported (Figure 1):

- Sporadic activity was reported by 4 regions, in AB(1) and ON(3).
- No activity was reported by the majority of regions (39).
- No data were reported by 10 regions.

Figure 1 – Map of overall influenza/ILI activity by province and territory, Canada, week 2018-36



Laboratory-Confirmed Influenza Detections

In weeks 35 and 36, the following results were reported from sentinel laboratories across Canada (Figure 2 and Figure 3):

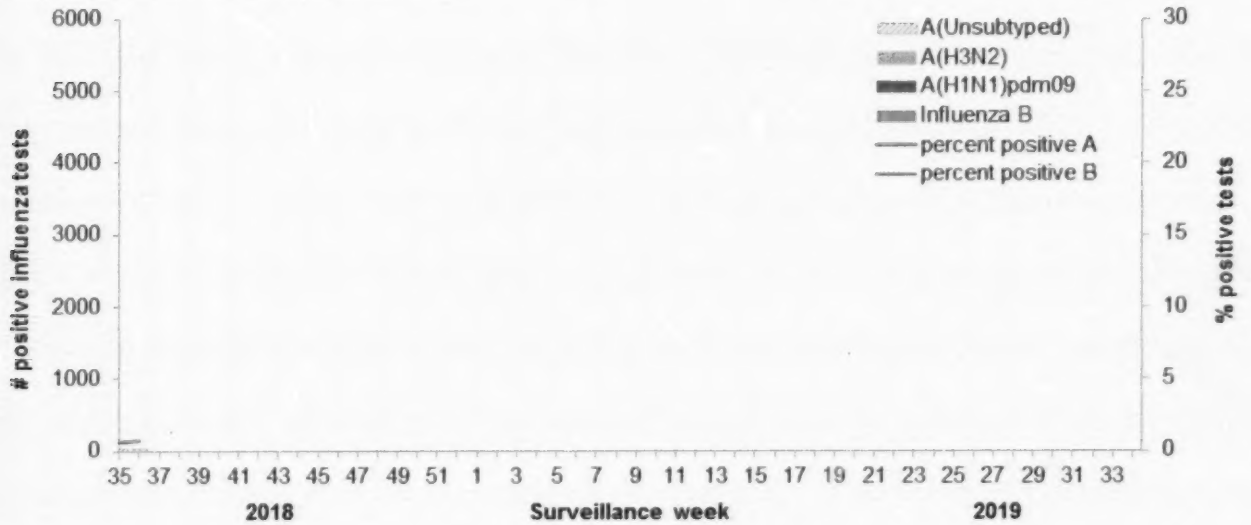
- Overall, laboratory detections of influenza are at interseasonal levels.
- A total of 25 laboratory detections of influenza were reported, all of which were influenza A.
- The percentage of tests positive for influenza was 0.68% and 0.71% in weeks 35 and 36 respectively

To date this season, detailed information on age and type/subtype has been received for >14 laboratory-confirmed influenza cases (Table 1).

- Adults 20-64 years of age represent the largest proportion of cases overall (82%)

For more detailed weekly and cumulative influenza data, see the text descriptions for Figures 2 and 3 or the Respiratory Virus Detections in Canada Report.

Figure 2 – Number of positive influenza tests and percentage of tests positive, by type, subtype and report week, Canada, weeks 2018-35 to 2018-36



The shaded area indicates weeks where the positivity rate was at least 5% and a minimum of 15 positive tests were observed, signalling the period of seasonal influenza activity.

Figure 3 – Cumulative numbers of positive influenza specimens by type/subtype and province/territory, Canada, weeks 2018-35 to 2018-36

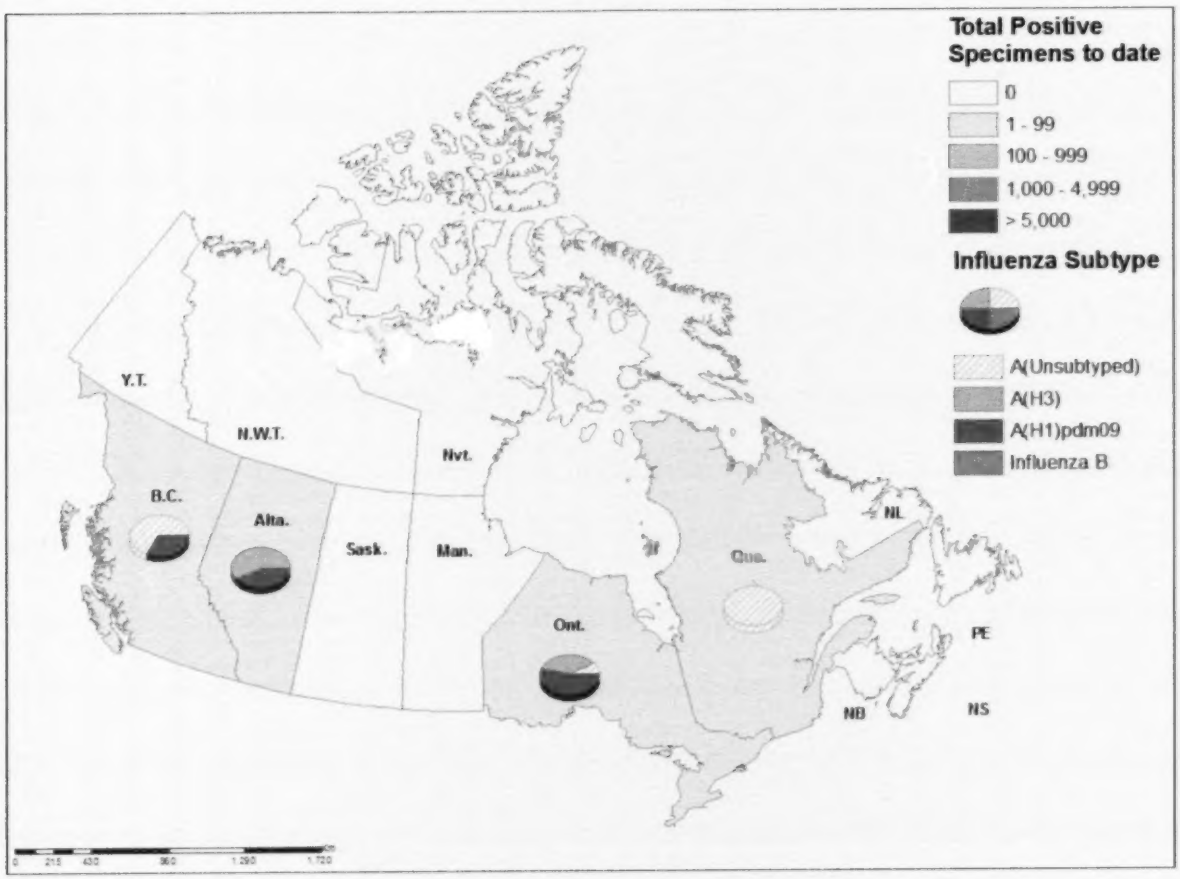


Table 1 – Cumulative numbers of positive influenza specimens by type, subtype and age-group reported through case-based laboratory reporting, Canada, weeks 2018-35 to 2018-36

Age groups (years)	Cumulative (August 26, 2018 to September 8, 2018)						
	Influenza A				B	Influenza A and B	
	A Total	A(H1N1) pdm09	A(H3N2)	A (UnS)[1]	Total	#	%
0-4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
5-19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
20-44	6	<5	0	<5	0	6	35%
45-64	8	<5	<5	<5	0	8	47%
65+	<5	0	<5	<5	0	<5	18%
Total	>14	8	5	<5	0	>14	100%

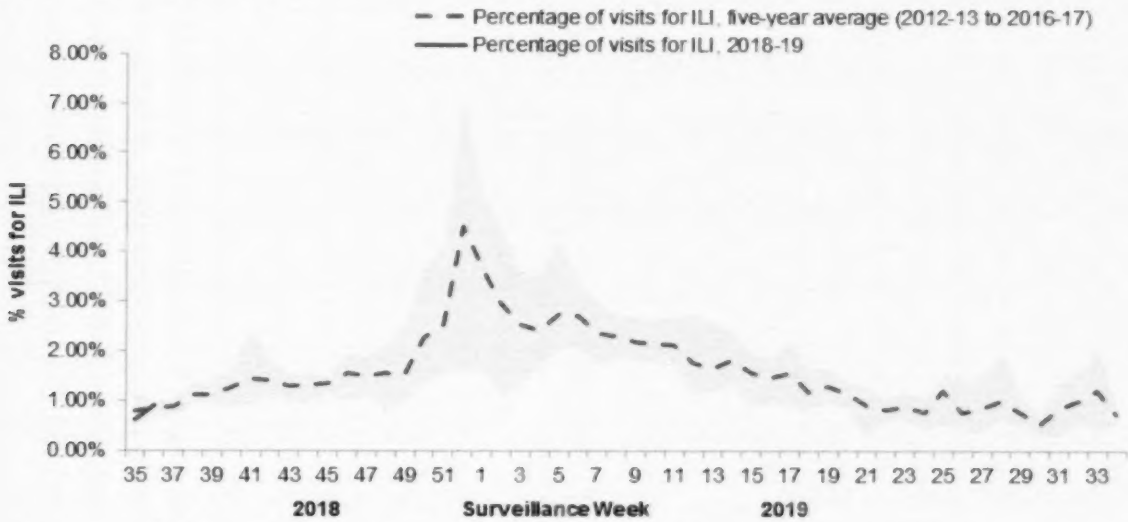
[1]UnS: unsubtyped: The specimen was typed as influenza A, but no result for subtyping was available;

Syndromic / Influenza-like Illness Surveillance

Healthcare Practitioners Sentinel Syndromic Surveillance

In week 36, 0.9% of visits to healthcare professionals were due to influenza-like illness (ILI) (Figure 4). The percentage of visits for ILI is at interseasonal levels.

Figure 4 – Percentage of visits for ILI reported by sentinels by report week, Canada, weeks 2018-35 to 2018-36
Number of Sentinels Reporting in Week 36: 64



The shaded area represents the maximum and minimum percentage of visits for ILI reported by week from seasons 2012-13 to 2016-17

Participatory Syndromic Surveillance

FluWatchers is a participatory ILI surveillance system that relies on weekly voluntary submissions of syndromic information from Canadians across Canada. Click here to learn more about the FluWatchers program.

If you are interested in becoming a FluWatcher for the 2018-19 season, sign up today.

The 2018-19 FluWatchers reporting season will begin October 1st, 2018 (week 40).

Influenza Outbreak Surveillance

In weeks 35 and 36, no new influenza or ILI outbreaks were reported.

Severe Outcomes Influenza Surveillance

Provincial/Territorial Influenza Hospitalizations and Deaths

In weeks 35 and 36 no influenza-associated hospitalizations were reported by participating provinces and territories[1].

[1]Influenza-associated hospitalizations are reported by Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Yukon. Only hospitalizations that require intensive medical care are reported by Saskatchewan.

Pediatric Influenza Hospitalizations and Deaths

Surveillance of laboratory-confirmed influenza associated pediatric (≤16 years of age) hospitalizations from the Immunization Monitoring Program Active (IMPACT) network has not yet begun for the 2018-19 season.

Adult Influenza Hospitalizations and Deaths

Surveillance of laboratory-confirmed influenza-associated adult (≥16 years of age) hospitalizations by the Canadian Immunization Research Network (CIRN) Serious Outcomes Surveillance (SOS) network has not yet begun for the 2018-19 season.

Influenza Strain Characterizations

The National Microbiology Laboratory has not yet reported influenza strain characterization results for influenza viruses collected during the 2018-19 season.

Antiviral Resistance

The National Microbiology Laboratory has not yet reported antiviral resistance results for influenza viruses collected during the 2018-19 season.

Provincial and International Surveillance Links

- **Alberta** – Influenza Surveillance
- **British Columbia** – Influenza Surveillance
- **Manitoba** - Seasonal Influenza Reports
- **New Brunswick** – Influenza Surveillance Reports
- **Newfoundland and Labrador** – Surveillance and Disease Reports
- **Nova Scotia** – Respiratory Watch Report
- **Ontario** – Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin
- **Prince Edward Island** – Influenza Summary
- **Saskatchewan** – Influenza Reports
- **Québec** – Sytème de surveillance de la grippe
- **Australia** – Influenza Surveillance Report and Activity Updates
- **European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control** – Surveillance reports and disease data on seasonal influenza
- **New Zealand** – Influenza Weekly Update
- **United Kingdom** – Weekly Influenza Activity Reports
- **Pan-American Health Organization** – Influenza Situation Report
- **United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention** – Weekly Influenza Summary Update
- **World Health Organization** – FluNet

Notes

To learn more about definitions, descriptions and the FluWatch program in general, see the Overview of influenza monitoring in Canada page. For more information on the flu, see our Flu(influenza) web page.

This report is available on the Government of Canada Influenza webpage.
Ce rapport est disponible dans les deux langues officielles.

We would like to thank all the Fluwatch surveillance partners who are participating in this year's influenza surveillance program.